

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVIII. ALL FRIENDS AGAIN.

THAT evening, when the Doctor was at his dinner, word was brought in that my Lord Shipton wished to speak to him. His lordship entered with a sort of mysterious manner, and without the least sense of having had any little "awkwardness" with his friend.

"See here, my dear Findlater, you're not going to let this go on—it's pushing the matter too far."

"Let what go on?" said the Doctor, innocently.

"Oh! this thing—this process; harassing a man like Ridley with law and all that. You're not going to drag the whole parish before a court?"

"But I am, you included, my lord. O'Reardon tells me he can get costs off every man of you—you're all good marks!"

"Oh! my dear sir, you can't think of such a thing. I made you every amende."

"Almond, or no almond, those are his words: good marks for costs, says he. It's out of my hands; he has his instructions."

Lord Shipton looked utterly miserable, and shrank and shivered in his light clothes.

"Good Heavens, Findlater, you can't be so malicious! There's Ridley, indeed, who stirred up the whole business, though he sent me to-night to make you his excuses, and see what can be done."

"Sent you, indeed! Why couldn't he come himself?"

"Oh! yes, and he wrote you this letter. Listen: 'Mr. Ridley regrets having been misled by certain reports, and begs to withdraw any statements that seem to reflect

on Doctor Findlater's character. He hopes that Doctor Findlater will have all proceedings stayed.'"

"And with that bit o' writing he thinks to patch up his infamous behaviour! It would serve him right to hunt him through every court in the kingdom, from th' Exchequer to the Common Pleace—the commonest would be too good for him. Give me that bit o' paper, Shipton, and we'll see what O'Reardon will say—whether it amounts to an almond, as you call it." Thus disposing of the visitor and his embassy, and bowing out Lord Shipton, he was left to himself to pursue the many devices that were on his mind.

After much anxious meditation, he found himself taking the road up to Leadersfort. He had put Lord Shipton's and Mr. Ridley's letters into his pocket, determining to turn them to good profit, and create a diversion. As he entered the avenue, he met the Leader carriage laden with trunks, and saw that the Seaman family were leaving. "So best," said the Doctor.

He walked into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Leader and her brother were seated, with another gentleman, whom the Doctor did not know. There was an anxious, worn look on Mrs. Leader's face. They stopped some consultation as he entered. "Regular lion's den," thought the Doctor to himself, "and I'm the Daniel."

"We are engaged," said the lady, curtly, "as you may see."

"A thousand pardons. I'll go up-stairs and see my child."

The brother here interposed. "We cannot have Mr. Leader harassed—you will understand that. It is my duty to tell you that, with these serious charges hanging over your family, he has completely changed his feelings towards you and your daughter."

"Oh! of course. But you know they're unfounded—all trumped up!"

"Of course—such things always are! But until they are proved to be so, he desires to have no communication with you. You may go up, if you wish, and satisfy yourself."

"Come along, then," said the Doctor. "But if he tells me to stay, I suppose I may?"

"Of course——"

"And if he tells you to leave the house," said Mrs. Leader, "care will be taken that he is obeyed."

"Nothing can be fairer, ma'am."

The party went up. As soon as the Doctor appeared in the room, Mr. Leader turned away pettishly.

"Keep this man away. He brings me worry and disgrace. You have imposed on us——"

The Doctor said gravely: "I shall leave, sir, the moment you desire. But first allow me to say two words. These charges have been withdrawn. Miss Leader, run your eyes over these two letters—the first, from the Honourable William Ridley; the second, from the Right Honourable the Lord Shipton, the ringleaders of the movement, if I may so call them."

Mary Leader read out the two letters in a low voice.

"In other words, the case has broken down, and a slandered man stands before you. I think in this house some almondest is due to my poor, injured Katey, who has been treated like some paryah——"

"Oh, I said so!" said Mr. Leader, eagerly. "I knew they were calumnies, and that the household where she was, or the family in which she lived, could never be the scene of such things. Oh!" said he, at once, "it is frightful this injustice; and I spoke so cruelly to her!"

"This excitement is very bad," said Mr. Morrison, "and will have the worst effect. Go away all of you, please."

Mary Leader had gone—had flown to Katey's room, and in a moment had returned with her as the others came out. The Doctor cast his arms about his child, and clasped her to his breast as she entered.

"No one will be so glad as this treasure," he said, "at her father being rayhabillelated!"

"Ah, there she is," said the sick man. "I knew that it was all false; that you, my dear, could never have aided in such things, or have been the affectionate child of a man that could do such things. But I thank

Heaven that I have not been guilty of any injustice towards you. I will put it beyond my power now. Send up that solicitor, and he shall prepare everything, and I shall sign while I have strength and capacity. At the threshold, it may be, of another life I shall do what is right and just. I am determined on it. Katey, my dear child, I shall make up to you and to your husband for all the injustice you have borne!"

Mrs. Leader's lips quivered; her foot could be heard pattering restlessly on the ground; she could say nothing, do nothing, save murmur some incoherent platitudes about his agitating himself. The quiet satisfaction in the Doctor's eyes stung her. In a moment Mary Leader had gone down, and had returned, leading the man of law. There was nothing very elaborate. A sheet of note-paper was all that was necessary, and a quarter of an hour's time was sufficient. At the end of that period Mr. Morrison and the lawyer came down to tell her what had been done—all had been left to Cecil Leader, with a settlement for Mrs. Leader, another for Katey and Mary Leader. It was duly witnessed, and in every way regular. It would stand.

"The game is up," said her brother to her, in a low voice. "That scheming Doctor has beaten us, and Mrs. Katey will be installed some day in this place."

Mrs. Leader waited till the legal gentleman had left the room, and then said:

"Never, Randall! Game up, indeed!—it is only beginning. A dozen wills may yet be made, and one *shall* be! That beggarly woman has not seen half my resources. Now that they have defied us, I tell you this: she shall never live in this place, or turn me out—no, not if I was to be dragged to a jail for it!" Her brother looked at her with wonder; he had often seen her vindictive and spiteful in a gentle, cat-like way, but never furious, and lost to all control, as she was at that moment. "From the day that creature forced herself in here, I felt—I knew that she was destined to try and ruin me. I have felt my dislike to her increasing every hour. I saw the end of her demure tricks, and the influence she was trying to obtain over that unfortunate man up-stairs. And now, see what she has done—she herself and her gang in possession of the whole estate! And we turned out with what I call a pittance—ah! never!—never!"

"What would you do?"

"Never! Sick and dying, indeed!—I

don't believe it. His illness has only brought out his weakness and folly. Any one could turn him round his finger. He'll live long, I tell you, and he shall live to undo what he did to-day. He shan't degrade me before the world—make a pauper of his own wife, to exalt a low, common apothecary's daughter, and put her in my place! But they will see, and that before a few hours."

"Why, what can you do?" he asked again.

"Tear it up—make him sign another! I would keep no terms with such folly and wickedness. There he is now, listening to her sweet comforts—her gentle, plausible twaddle—and he pouring his soft, pious gratitude into her ear. I am very glad this has happened, for she thinks herself secure. I know what to do. Come with me, Randall. One day you shall have all this fine estate, and that girl shall marry you, and we shall get the title—baronetcy, peerage, even! My hands have been tied up to this time; I have no one to help me, or, rather, every one is against me. And then came this vile, miserable marriage, to drag us all down into the puddles. Come with me, Randall, to the boudoir—or stay, come back in half an hour."

She went back to the sick-room, and there found Katey reading the Bible to Mr. Leader. "You can go," said her step-mother, coldly. "I wish to speak to him."

The night was drawing on—a dark, wet, drizzly night. Lamps were beginning to be lighted, servants went about softly. Katey rose. The sick man looked after her, and stretched out his hands in alarm. "Don't go—don't leave me!" he cried. There was consternation written in his face, which signified plainly his consciousness that he had done something which might expose him to the old punishment of private rebuke. Indeed, nothing was more curious in this illness than this development of a childish irresolution, always prominent in Mr. Leader's timorous character. There was a sternness and contempt in Mrs. Leader's face.

"No wonder you are afraid to look me in the face after the piece of injustice you have done me. Do not disturb yourself—it is bad for you—but consult your conscience. I only come to tell you" (to Katey) "that you needn't remain. You have accomplished the work you and your family have planned"—this she added in a low voice—"so you may relax your labours."

Katey had long since seen the useless-

ness of self-justification or defence, so she merely rose up silently, and went her way. Mrs. Leader was left alone with her husband. Katey then heard the door locked on the inside.

Doctor Findlater was waiting to set out on his journey homewards, and was sitting in a sort of council with the London doctor, who had gone into the town to see the regimental surgeon, whom he had known before, and was now returned. The Doctor was in peace and good-humour with all men, and had been telling the town doctor how they "had got him to settle his affairs, and how all that was now happily shovelled off his mind."

When Katey announced to them that Mrs. Leader was with her husband, a sort of uneasiness spread over the faces of the party. After about an hour's absence she came down, with what seemed quite a changed manner, and said: "I have been with him all this time, and he has told me everything, and all that he has arranged. I can make no complaint; he has behaved to me fairly, and even handsomely. He has spoken in a calm, deliberate way, that has surprised me; and he engaged me to go down at once, and tell you all the impression that his words have left upon me."

"Nothing could be fairer, Mrs. Leader," said Doctor Speed; "and it is only what could be expected from you."

"It would be affectation," she went on, "my denying that I have been much displeased at—well, at what has taken place lately. I say openly, I disapprove of it still; and I still hold that the step Cecil Leader has taken disentitles him to any consideration. Yes," she added, turning to Katey, "you know me well by this time, and it must not be thought cruel, if I say that he and you ought to be punished, by being disinherited."

"Nothing like candour, ma'am," said our Doctor, warmly; "and I respect you the more for speaking out."

"Now, however, it is not time for such things. My poor husband is clearly dying. He thinks any steps of the kind would be revengeful and vindictive, and would rest on his soul. He has told me what he has arranged, and wishes that his last moments should be peaceful, and not disturbed by any struggles about his bed, and so I am content; and I am satisfied that you, Doctor Findlater, and your family, should remain, and that we should all do our best to make his last moments happy."

The Doctor advanced, and put out his hand. "If I might take the liberty, madam. I have never heard anything so generous or magnanimous. That's true nobility and self-abnegation."

The tender-hearted Katey felt a sense of shame overpowering her, at the rather unworthy hostility she had shown towards this cold but really upright woman. She advanced timorously, her hands out, her face pleading piteously, and glowing with a sense of having done injustice. Mrs. Leader saw the hesitation, and said quietly: "Don't be afraid, Katey; by-and-bye you will know me better, and come to do me justice."

With that Katey ran forward, and Mrs. Leader folded her cold arms about her. The Doctor looked on with a beaming face.

"Well," he said, "this was worth coming to see! Really y' extort this from me, Mrs. Leader, and I tell you so, that I have never seen such a noble magnanimity! Ah! now we'll all be friends again; and, please God, our poor fellow up-stairs will get better, and we'll all start a new life together, bearing and forbearing, and making the best of what's bad. It's generous and noble—that's what I say."

Mrs. Leader made no reply to these compliments beyond a bow. Then she said to Katey, "Come with me, dear, to the boudoir—I want to consult you." And the two quitted the room together. When the Doctor was left alone, an extraordinary change passed over his face.

"Th' old she-devil! What new game is this she's at—to throw us off the scent, I suppose, with her hyenaish blandishment. By the holy pepper, they ought to engage me at th' Haymarket. I'm an actor born and bred, and the way I played up to her face was noble! Oh," added the Doctor, pressing his hands to his forehead, "if my wits would only help me to beat her at this! She's got some deep tricks at work, and this is to put us to sleep. My goodness! if I could only be up to her. Worm this out, Fin; you mustn't let yourself have so much as ten winks till the crisis be past, and our minds get rest! But I must have allies, I can't do all myself. My goodness! what I've done is superhuman. Stay, here's the very one."

Mary Leader had entered, looking for her sister-in-law. In a moment the Doctor had drawn her over to the window, and was telling her his story; turning her, in short, into an ally. She had a vast deal of shrewd sense and penetration, though she

had no worldly experience. And the Doctor put what had just taken place before her so graphically, that she at once leaped to the same conclusion. Only that conclusion was coloured by the daughter's tender affection. She was thinking of her loved and faithful father; his simple tastes, his weary life and drudgery in the midst of splendours which they both detested; their little expeditions; her sole friend, for hereafter she would be always face to face with an enemy. And now, after his cheerless life, to think that his last moments were to be harassed, and he was to pass away in the midst of importunings from greedy hands, and eyes, and voices! It should not be. Those awful moments, now not far away, should be held sacred; and at that moment, with eyes upturned to heaven, she aloud made a vow, consecrating herself to that filial and holy duty. Thus the Doctor secured the best ally in the world, and with her he concerted a plan.

CHAPTER XXIX. KATEY'S EXPEDITION.

Now was the night drawing on, and lights about the house. There was a stillness as of expectancy; the servants went about softly, and on tiptoe. The clergyman was again with the given-over patient. The London doctor sat in the parlour, writing letters. It seemed as if there was the shadow of the expected minutes already cast, and that they were conscious of it. At all events, here was Katey mournful and subdued, coming softly from the boudoir, fresh from Mrs. Leader's caresses, and persuaded that injustice had been done to that lady. It was all temperament, and an unfortunate manner, which gave a false idea of her character.

As she came out she was met by a servant with a letter for her, on a salver. She did not know the writing, and, going to her own room, read with astonishment:

MY DEAR MRS. CECIL LEADER,—I am sure that you know me too well to suppose that it could be anything but the best intentions in the world, and a sincere interest in your family, that could tempt me to write to you as I am about to do.

She turned to look at the signature, and saw it was signed, CHARLES MONTAGUE.

You and your father have latterly been so much away from your house at Tilston, that it is natural you should not have remarked what has been going on. I am sorry to say others have been very observant, and

have not confined their notice to that; for the matter is a subject of daily remark.

There is a peculiar flutter that comes on as we read a letter that begins in a mysterious fashion of this sort: when all is so obscure that we know not what may be coming—a calamity, a shock, a surprise, perhaps only some trifle. Katey felt her heart sinking, for latterly the air had been so charged with signs and tokens of tempest and confusion—that any misfortune was “on the cards,” as it were. She read on:

I had best say at once that this refers to your sister, Miss Polly. You will have known that she has formed a most unfortunate intimacy with a family who lives next door to you, Captain Moynieux and his wife; and I will venture to say that no more dangerous and unsuitable companion could be found for a young girl. I have hinted this often to your father, and to herself, but it is a very delicate matter, as you must know; and, indeed, my well-meant endeavours have already caused me to perceive that they were unwelcome; but I am sure you will give me credit for good intentions, as the matter is really very serious.

Katey's hand here went to her side. She had had, indeed, forebodings of this terrible trouble. What *did* it mean? She read on:

The truth is this—Molynieux, who is as ungentelemanly as he is dissolute, has been boasting of the influence he has over your sister, and, I understand, has actually made her the subject of a very heavy wager, which depends upon a fixed date. Again you must forgive my approaching this matter, but it is really necessary that some step be taken, and at once. I hear that there is to be a dinner and ball given to-night at Westcup, by some rather doubtful people, to which Molynieux insists on bringing his wife and your sister. From something I have heard from a friend of his, I believe that he will seize this opportunity to compromise your sister in some way. She has had a quarrel with your father, and might, through her resentment, fall into the trap. I have thought it right to give you this warning in preference to Doctor Findlater, who might naturally be inclined to take up the matter too seriously, and turn it into a scandal. I know you will forgive my freedom; but there is no time to be lost.

I am, yours sincerely,

CHARLES MONTAGUE.

Agitated, miserable, at this unexpected news, Katey faltered; the letter dropped from her fingers. What *was* she to do? She had her duties here; there was Peter, she dared not consult him. There would be, indeed, according to his favourite phrase, “wigs,” not merely “on the green,” but kicked into the air, flung over the wall, and disposed of in every violent way. The best course clearly was to hurry into the little town, see Polly, detain her, forcibly, if necessary, and tell Peter in the morning.

This was no sooner thought of than it was done. In a moment she had got her things, had stolen out by the green-house, and was hurrying through the gardens, then across the fields to Tilston. It was already dark as she hurried along—it was not more than a quarter of an hour's walk. It was then that, for the first time for many weeks, she had an opportunity of considering her strange position, and how, within so short a time, they had been involved in all this struggling, and battling, and agitation. One little gleam of grace had come in Mrs. Leader's generous advance; but here was this poor child, Polly, wayward and foolish, and with no one now that had the art of leading her gently, or thus managing her. But she determined, as soon as she herself was in some independent situation, Polly should come to her, and be married to some firm, steady, kindly man, who would control her, and make her happy.

Here was the Doctor's house at last. Their old man-servant stared as he opened the door, to see her arriving in such a fashion. But the hall was all dark.

“Where is Miss Polly?”

“Gone next door to the captain and his wife, where, between ourselves, Miss Katey, it would be better for her mind and heart had she not gone. Ah! an ill-mannered fellow, and no gentleman.”

Katey felt her heart sink: not so much from this news as from the difficulty of knowing how to act. What could she do? “Run in,” she said, “quick, and ask her to come here.”

“Come in! Oh! isn't she off on a galivant to the town yonder? Ah! it's a disgrace on the Doctor; and with a chap of that sort, who's no real gentleman!”

“But I must see her—I want her—we must find her!” said Katey, distractedly. “Go in, do, and ask where they are gone, when they are to be back. Find out everything.”

The old man went in, and presently re-

turned without news, only bringing with him the address of the house in Westcup, where the party was being given. Katey thought a moment, then decided on sacrificing everything to the interest of this precious jewel. She hurried back to the Fort, there quietly ordered out a little brougham, as if to drive into Tilston. Just as she was going down, she met her father.

"Here, where have you been?" he said, testily. "We've been hunting for you everywhere. Go up and attend on him."

"But how is he?" she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, better—better, I think," said the Doctor, angrily. "It's all a false cry, I believe. The man'll be as well as any of us."

This was a relief; now she felt less scruple. Making some excuse, she escaped from him, got round to the back of the house, and in a few moments was driving away to Tilston.

That was a dreary, blank journey indeed. Never had Katey in her whole life been in such a terrible crisis; and when she was half-way, for the first time there flashed upon her the strange misconception that might be placed upon her absence. How was she to account for it? Fortunate it was that Mrs. Leader had shown such generosity in reconciliation; she would not now take any advantage of this absence, as Mr. Leader was recovering. Still, what was she to say? how was she to explain such an expedition? Yes; Peter would help. She would tell him; his cleverness would devise something.

As she reached Tilston she thought for a moment what she was to do next, before starting on what would be a good hour and a half's drive, and on so wild and uncertain an expedition. What was she to do—whither was she to go? If she had only some one to advise with—to consult. Ah, that Captain Montague, "prig" as he was, was good-natured and sincere. It would be no harm to consult him. In a moment she was at the barracks, and had sent up for him. He came to her at once.

"I knew you would not misunderstand me," he said; "and, indeed, since I wrote, I have heard what has more than confirmed my fears. Even at the mess-table, which I have just left, it is known that he has made this boast—this blackguard boast, as I call it—and has found that Hickey to take up his wager. He says that this very night he will so compromise your sister that—"

"What am I to do?" cried Katey, in despair. "It is too late now—"

"Not at all," he said, gravely, "if you have spirit and courage for the undertaking. And if you will let me aid you—"

"If you only would," said she.

"Nothing easier," he said. "One of our men is going, and I can get him to take me. I will meet you at Westcup. Perhaps you may even find her at the hotel before they have left. If so, all will be well. I can manage, and you can manage. If they have gone to the ball, why, still I can follow."

"This is indeed kind of you," said she; "but it will take such a time, and they expect me at home."

"Not at all. An hour's sharp driving will do it. I shall be there before you. Drive to the Red Lion. Don't forget the name. I shall meet you there."

He was gone, and in a few moments Mr. Leader's brougham-horse was rattling over the roads to Westcup.

RAIDS OVER THE BORDER.

THE LAND OF SCOTT. PART III.

HE who visits the Tweed must, if he be a true pilgrim, visit the Ettrick and the Yarrow, and the many intermingling streams of this beautiful corner of Scotland. The Yarrow more especially claims the tribute of the traveller who loves the picturesque in scenery, or the traditional in song; no longer, as Wordsworth said of it, "A river bare, flowing the dark hills under;" but a river with banks well planted with noble trees, and as sylvan and umbrageous as Dr. Samuel Johnson himself, who said there were no trees in Scotland, could have desired. There are few tragedies in Scottish legend more touching than that recorded in the quaint, but pathetic ballad, Busk ye, busk ye, my bonnie, bonnie Bride; the bride whose bridegroom met his untimely fate on the braes of Yarrow, at the hands of the lady's brothers, as sung by William Hamilton of Bangour, and afterwards in softer and almost equally impressive strains by John Logan, a Scottish poet, who wrote unfortunately too little, but who is known to many English readers by his delicious little poem to the Cuckoo. Wordsworth's two poems of Yarrow Unvisited, and Yarrow Revisited, the former more especially, have added new gems to the tiara which the nymph of the Yarrow might be privileged to wear if emerging from her "dens," no longer "dowie," she could appear to mortal eyes. But the whole land is enchanted. Turn where we will,

some memory confronts us—tender or heroic—or both in one: something that tells of “the unconquerable strength of love” and the all-pervading influences of sorrow. Wordsworth says:

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown,
It must, or we shall rue it,
We have a vision of our own,
And why should we undo it?

But no traveller of cultivated mind can undo the vision he may have formed of this river—rather of this rivulet. It is a weird stream; weird memories hover above and around it, and he who can recal them need never fear to rue his visit to the “dowie dens” or the “bonnie holms” of Yarrow.

The towns, and castles, and strongholds of this region are too many to be enumerated: but any traveller with spare time, and with Scott's and Wordsworth's poems, and the Border Minstrelsy, in his travelling-bag, need never be at a loss for indicators as to the places he should visit, or for information concerning them. But Newark Castle claims especial attention as the scene where the Last Minstrel sang his celebrated Lay to the pitying Duchess of Buccleuch, widow of James Duke of Monmouth, the luckless and handsome son of Charles the Second. Newark was built by James the Second of Scotland. Upon the marriage of James the Fourth with Margaret, daughter of Henry the Seventh, the Castle of Newark, with the whole of Ettrick Forest, including the greater part of Selkirkshire, was assigned to the lady as part of her jointure. It afterwards, partly by usurpation and partly by grant, passed into the possession of the Buccleuch family. Another great house in the neighbourhood, not, like Newark, a ruin, but in full preservation, and inhabited, is Philiphaugh; once the abode of a personage celebrated on the Scottish Border as the Outlaw Murray. The exploits of this doughty moss-trooper, and an adventure which he had with King James, by the result of which he ceased to be an outlaw, and became as honest a gentleman as any other Borderer (which is not saying much), are recorded in the Song of the Outlaw Murray, in Scott's Minstrelsy of the Border, where the Castle of Philiphaugh is described as built of stone and lime, and standing pleasantly. At a later period (1643), the battle of Philiphaugh, fought by the Marquis of Montrose against the Covenanters, gave the place additional celebrity in Scottish annals. At the fatal field of Philiphaugh, Montrose lost, says Scott, “in one defeat the fruit of six splendid

victories, nor was he again able to make head in Scotland against the covenanted cause.”

Leaving Yarrow and its memories, we return to the Tweed, and make our last pilgrimage in this lovely region to the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, and the grave of Scott. The abbey was founded in the twelfth century, and if a judgment may be formed of its extent and beauty by its noble remains, it must have been one of the most magnificent ecclesiastical edifices in Scotland. After the Dissolution it became the property of the Haliburtons, and now belongs to the Earls of Buchan, who have a modern residence in near proximity. Were Dryburgh merely a fine ruin, with a history, it would attract many visitors; but as the burial-place of Sir Walter Scott, selected by himself, it has associations of still deeper interest. The tomb stands in St. Mary's aisle, and is a large, plain, massive structure, enclosed within a railing. I should have liked, had it been possible, to gather a wild-flower from that honoured grave; but no wild-flowers grow upon the plain stone, though many flourish and glitter among the ruins, adding their little graces and amenities to the decaying places in which they grow. Not being able to pluck flowers from the minstrel's grave, I did the next best thing in my power: I placed a posy of the brightest and freshest upon the tomb, and left Dryburgh with the feeling that in that spot of his own choice the venerated remains of Scott lay in a fit shrine. The whole ruin, indeed the whole Border Land, is his monument.

Retracing our steps to Edinburgh, we take the rail for Stirling and the lovely region of the Southern Highlands of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, as much the land of Scott as are the Border counties. Our first halting-place is Linlithgow, of which the name was always a puzzle to antiquaries, until the worthy Colonel Robertson, in his Gaelic Topography of Scotland, explained it as representing “the dark grey Linn Pool,” from the Gaelic “Linne liath dhu.” The dilapidated castle, which gives the place its whole interest, is beautiful in itself, and full of historic and legendary memories. In Sir David Lindsay's Tale, in Marmion, there occurs the passage:

Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling.

Lord Jeffrey described these lines as being evidently formed on the familiar model of

Sternhold and Hopkins. They certainly have the trick of those venerable masters of doggerel. But, as a modern Homer has undoubtedly as much right to a nap as his ancient predecessor, no more need be said on that subject. The palace is one of about twenty that once belonged to the old kings of Scotland—often richer in palaces than in faithful subjects. It first became a royal residence in the twelfth century, or at least is mentioned as early as the year 1126. In the year 1300, Edward the First took up his winter quarters at the Castle of Linlithgow, which he partly rebuilt and greatly extended. In 1302, according to Stowe, in his *Annales of England*, he kept his Christmas here (Stowe calls the place Litheke, which closely resembles the modern Scottish "Lithgow," the name which the railway officials call out when the train stops at the station). Here he maintained "a puissant armie," but, through "the earnest suit of Philip, King of France, whose sister he had lately married," adds Stowe, "he granted a truce with the Scots." The truce was not of long duration, and the English king—one of the very noblest of the Norman line—held the castle till his death. It was not finally delivered back to Scottish keeping till Bruce drove out the English, and secured the independence of Scotland at Bannockburn. Linlithgow Castle was the favourite residence of the Stuarts, where, in the few bright and peaceful years—it might almost be said weeks or days—allowed them by the ambition and the treason of the great and very turbulent Scottish nobles, who contested supreme authority with them, they held state and revel. James the Fourth and James the Fifth greatly extended the palace; and here Mary of Guise, queen of the last-mentioned king, gave birth, some years after the premature death of her two elder children, sons, to another Mary—the luckless Mary, afterwards Queen of Scots. Her father had set his heart upon another son to succeed to his perilous throne; a throne to be held against all pretenders, by dint of sword, as well as of cunning and statesmanship; and when he was informed of the birth of a daughter, his mind was filled with evil forebodings. "Is it even so?" he exclaimed to the messenger who brought the tidings; "then farewell to the glory of the House of Stuart—God's will be done! It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass." Queen Mary never knew a father's care, for the unhappy king died seven days after she was

born. Queen Elizabeth of England, who would have been very well satisfied if James of Scotland had left neither heir nor heiress, more especially if either were of the religious faith of Mary of Guise, was informed by some of the people about the court—anxious, as sycophants are in all ages, to flatter the wishes and the prejudices of the powerful—that the babe was far too frail and sickly to live. Mary of Guise was indignant when she heard the rumour, and ordered the child to be unswaddled and exhibited in *puris naturalibus* before Sir Ralph Sadler, the English ambassador. Sir Ralph, who was himself a father and a judge of infant humanity, wrote to the Queen of England, for her information, "that the princess was as goodly a child as he had ever seen of her age," and very likely to live, and ascend the throne of Scotland.

When Mary grew to maturity, and after her return from France, in her young widowhood, she resided occasionally at Linlithgow, as she did once or twice after her ill-omened marriage with Lord Darnley. It was at Linlithgow that the Regent Murray, Mary's half-brother, was assassinated by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh—an incident which occupies its fitting place in all the histories of Scotland, and which forms the groundwork of one of Sir Walter Scott's minor poems. If the full history of Linlithgow Castle were written, it would be a history of the House of Stuart for three hundred years—a task somewhat too elaborate and comprehensive for a traveller and sightseer—so we pass on, with proper respect to its venerable associations, not forgetting that the old poet, Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, bade farewell to it in the flattering words:

Adieu, Lithgow! whose palace of plaisance
Might be a pattern to Portugal or France!

The ruin is maintained in ornamental order, and prevented from further decay and dilapidation by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, though there are Scottish grumblers who stoutly maintain that if the Scottish members in Parliament did their duty by their country about these ruins, more money would be voted for this purpose than is now expended upon it.

From Linlithgow, all the way upon historic ground, we pass on to Falkirk, whose tall spire stands like a landmark to the north of the line of rail at the head of the Firth of Forth. Falkirk, like every other Scottish town of a hundred years old and upwards, is famous in history for the

battles fought in its neighbourhood, either by the Scotch against the English, or by the Scotch among themselves. But the most memorable battle ever fought at Falkirk was that in which Wallace was defeated by Edward the First, which is quaintly recorded by Stowe in his *Annals*:

"King Edward," says the annalist, "wanne the battell of Faulkirke in Scotland, upon Saint Mary Magdalens daie, in which battell was slaine more than twentie thousand Scots, and William Walleis their captaine fled. Anthony Beke, Bishop of Duresme, had at this battell such a retinue, that in his companie were two and thirtie banners." It would appear that King Edward's victory caused great rejoicing among his own people. "The citizens of London," Stowe adds, "hearing of the great victorie obtained by the King of England against the Scottes, made great and solemne triumph in their citie, everie one according to their craft, especiallie the fishmongers, which with solemne procession passed through the citie, having, amongst other Pageantes and Shewes, foure Sturgeons gilded, carried on foure horses; then foure Salmones of silver on foure horses; and after sixe and fourtie knights armed, riding on horses, made like Lucies of the Sea; and then Saint Magnus with a thousand horsemen; this they did on Saint Magnus daie, in honour of the kinges great victorie, and safe returne." The Scots, however, had a full revenge at Bannockburn, not very long afterwards.

Modern Falkirk is a pleasant town, and, like Ayr, is noted for honest (and hard-drinking) men, and bonnie lasses; but its chief claims to remembrance, in our day, are its annual "trystes," or cattle markets, where more oxen and sheep are gathered together in one day than in any other town or city of the British empire, or perhaps of the world. A worthy Highlander, lately gone to his rest, who in his day was the greatest sheep farmer and cattle breeder in the North, was accustomed at the Falkirk trystes, over his toddy in the evening, to hold forth to a sympathetic auditory in his favourite public-house, or "howf," on the great dignity of his calling. He asserted that to drive large flocks of sheep safely from the Highlands to the Lowlands, was a work both of statesmanship and generalship, that entitled the performer thereof to a high place among the worthies of his country. "Talk of the Duke of Wellington," he said; "na doot

he was a great man, a vera great man; and managed a few thousand troops weel eneuch at Waterloo: but could he ha'e driven a hundred thousand sheep from Sutherlandshire, and put them safely, without the loss of ane o' them, into the Falkirk tryste? No! my certies. That's a job that wad ha'e been ower tough for him. He could na ha'e done it, sir, he could na."

Beyond Falkirk, on the road to Stirling, are some remains of the Torwood, celebrated as the place where Donald Cargill, the sturdy Covenanter, launched his anathemas against and excommunicated the king, the episcopate, and all who sought to introduce episcopacy into Scotland against the will of the people. For this, among many minor acts, all done for conscience sake, and for a sincere adherence to truth and duty, as he understood them, the brave and eloquent Cargill died a felon's death at Edinburgh, leaving behind him a great name, as one of the noblest of the long roll of Scottish martyrs in the cause of religious liberty. Passing many places of which the names are more or less suggestive of incidents and episodes of the dark and troublous days of Scottish history, we come gradually in sight of Stirling Castle, next to that of Edinburgh, which it greatly resembles, the most picturesque and imposing fortress in Scotland. Stirling is in the very heart of the country, and from its esplanade the stranger may survey the glorious panorama of the Highland hills on the one side, and the rich fields and carse of the Lowlands on the other. Looking from the castle over the long level through which the Forth winds its lazy way to the ocean, it is difficult not to believe that all this low-lying and rich ground was not in some remote period a sea-bottom, when the firth, or estuary, extended from Airth and Alloa upwards as far as the Rock of Stirling, and when the waves of the ocean rolled over the sites where now stand many hundreds of populous villages and towns, and many venerable ruins of abbeys and palaces renowned in song and story.

Stirling is a very ancient town, and even more than Edinburgh was the courtly capital of Scotland; from the days of Robert Bruce to those of James the Fifth its castle was alike famous for love and war, festivity and treachery, with dark deeds to which justice and history might give the harshest epithets that language can employ. Here James the First, the amiable

author of the King's Quair, passed his happiest days, with his beautiful English wife. Here James the Second cruelly murdered the Black Douglas, as will be mentioned more particularly hereafter. Here James the Third loved to dwell, and expended large sums in extending and ornamenting the place. From this castle James the Fourth set out on the fatal expedition to Flodden. All the readers of Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, if not his best, his most popular poem, are familiar with Stirling, once, though nobody knows when, called Snowdown, and with the adventures of the chivalrous James the Fifth, as there recorded. James the Knight of Snowdown, James the Gudeman of Ballengeich, James the Gaberlunzie-man, is to this day one of the most popular members of this illustrious and unlucky house, and the poets and romancers seem never to have tired of recording his adventures of love or war, or of his mere frolics of exuberant animal spirits. Here his daughter Mary passed her infancy, and here, while she was yet a romping wee lassie, though she had been solemnly crowned as queen when less than nine months old, a treaty was entered into between her guardians and the ambassador of Henry the Eighth of England, by which Mary was, when ten years of age, to be sent to England to complete her education, and to be in due time married to Prince Edward, the bluff king's son, afterwards Edward the Sixth of England. How different the history both of England and Scotland might have been, had this marriage been accomplished! The world might have heard nothing of "bloody Mary," or "good Queen Bess," and the quiet, domestic history of poor Mary might have pointed no moral, and adorned no tale for the warning of posterity. But she was fated to wed, not the good and wise Edward, but the foolish and cruel Darnley, and in Stirling Castle the son of that ill-starred marriage received his early education at the hands of the learned Buchanan, whose teachings were more of a kind to make his pupil an industrious man of letters than the king of an unruly people.

But the one great event in the history of Stirling and its castle, overshadowing all others in the heart of every true Scotsman from that day to this, a period of five hundred and fifty-six years, is the battle of Bannockburn, fought almost within arrow-shot of its walls. Falkirk would have been a bitter memory to the Scotch if its disaster had not been wiped out by Bannockburn; and Flodden, more disastrous still,

would have been a name of evil augury had not the flower of English chivalry been laid low by the victorious Bruce under the walls of Stirling Castle. The battle has never been better described than by Robert Paston, a contemporary writer and monk of the Carmelite order, quoted by Stowe. The English host numbered one hundred thousand men, and the Scottish but thirty thousand. The English were led by an inefficient and unskilful general, the Scotch by a consummate master of the art of war. The English fought for conquest and dominion; the Scottish for liberty and independence of a foreign yoke. The English were on an alien soil, surrounded by enemies; the Scotch were on their own soil, and all the men and women, and even the small lads and lasses, were their friends and auxiliaries. Stirling Castle had been held by the English ever since the defeat of Wallace at Falkirk, and Edward the Second heard that an attempt was to be made by Robert Bruce to recapture it. The English king immediately made great efforts, not alone to prevent this catastrophe, but to maintain English ascendancy in Scotland. "Never before," says Paston, "was seen the like preparation, pride, and cost in the time of war." Paston was present at the battle, and was taken prisoner by the Scotch, which event, says Stowe, "he sorrowfully bewailed in heroic verse." The English host took up a position near the village of St. Ninian's, between which place and the Scottish position, near Bannockburn, was a soft swampy morass, unfit for the passage of cavalry. This treacherous ground was carefully prepared by the Scotch, and with a success which, as regards the English, was only too tremendous. "The first night," says Paston, "ye might have seen the Englishmen bathing themselves in wine, and casting their gorgets; there was crying, shouting, wassailing, and drinking, with other rioting far above measure. On the other side we might have seen the Scottes quiet, stille, and close, fasting the even of St. John the Baptiste, laboring in love of the liberties of their countrie. On the morrow the Scottes, having gotten the most convenient place in the field for victorie, made ditches in the ground three feete deepe, and the like in breadth, from the right wing of the army unto the left, covering the same with weak twygges and hurdles, and again over with turfe and grasse, which was not of the strength to bear horsemen." The ruse de guerre was utterly unsuspected by the

English cavalry, which charging impetuously, tumbled pell-mell into the trenches, where they fell an easy prey to their opponents. A panic after awhile seized the English army, which was increased at the most critical moment of the fray by the sudden appearance of what appeared a large Scottish reinforcement, but which was no other than a great assemblage of camp-followers and non-combatants, blowing trumpets and waving scarfs and articles of attire as banners, and presenting, as they advanced on the already discomfited hosts of Edward, the appearance of a strong auxiliary army. The rout was complete, the English left upwards of twenty thousand dead upon the field and prisoners in the hands of the enemy, and the king, setting spurs to his horse, endeavoured to gain admission to Stirling Castle. He was informed that the place could not hold out, and advised to seek safety elsewhere. Ultimately, and with great difficulty, he made his way along the shores of the Firth of Forth beyond Edinburgh to Dunbar, where, after lying concealed in the friendly castle of Gospatrick, Earl of March, for a few days, he escaped by sea to his own country. Scott has described this battle in imperishable verse, and even to this day, when all animosity between Englishmen and Scotsmen has happily passed away, and the two are one people, with only such slight differences of character and idiosyncrasy as to show that they are not twins, though excellent good friends and brothers, this story of the battle is never recited in Scottish ears without exciting a thrill of patriotic emotion. The battle was a fortunate accident, or a happy achievement, I do not care which it may be called, both for the Scotch and the English. It prevented the English from vaunting themselves too much; and it prevented the Scotch from considering themselves too hopelessly the inferiors of the more numerous and powerful English. Not but that the Scotch were somewhat vainglorious on the subject; but if they be, the little trait of character may be pardoned for the patriotic spirit that underlies it. "There never was a Scotchman," said an insolent cockney at Stirling to a worthy Scot, who was acting as guide to the castle, "who did not want to get out of Scotland almost as soon as he had got into it." "That such may be the fact, I'll no gainsay," replied the Scot. "There were about twenty thousand o' your countrymen, and mair, wha wanted to get out of Scotland on the day of Bannockburn. But they could na' win. And

they're laying at Bannockburn the noo; and have never been able to get out o' Scotland yet." Bannockburn is always the set-off to Flodden in popular estimation, and without it Flodden would be a sore subject. "So you are going to England to practise surgery," said a Scottish lawyer to a client, who had been a cow-doctor; "but have you skill enough for your new profession?" "Hoots! aye! plenty o' skill!" "But are you not afraid ye may sometimes kill your patients, if you do not study medicine for awhile as your proper profession?" "Nae fear! and if I do kill a few o' the Southrons, it will take a great deal o' killing to mak up for Flodden!"

The view from Stirling Castle impresses all beholders with its variety and beauty, including, as it does, not only the field of Bannockburn, the Abbey Crag, on which a monument in memory of William Wallace has of late years been erected, which stands as a landmark, visible in every direction for many miles around; but the beautiful woods of Kier, the fashionable watering place, the Bridge of Allan, the majestic ruins of the Abbey of Cambuskenneth, and the sinuous river that—issuing from the highest hills beyond Callander—assumes the names, ere it reaches Stirling, of the Avondhu and the Forth. And the interior of the castle is as greatly worthy of a long visit from every intelligent and well-read traveller as the exterior. In the banquetting-hall, the kings of the houses of Bruce and of Stuart, and even of an earlier time, were accustomed to hold the Round Table, supposed to have been originally established by King Arthur, though no record states when that fabulous monarch inhabited Scotland. The old Parliament House, in which the Estates of the realm met under the Stuarts, is now used as a barrack for the garrison. Almost, if not every, room of the palace and castle has its own little bit of romance and tradition; but that which excites the greatest interest among the multitude—for the same reason that makes the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's so attractive—is the little bedroom of King James the Second, where a very ghastly tragedy was enacted, ghastly alike in its first act as in its climax and catastrophe. William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, haughtiest and savagest among the haughty and savage Scottish nobles of his time, carried things with somewhat too high a hand in the south of Scotland, and in his own extensive domain, to be considered either a peaceable, a safe, or a loyal subject, by his king. Douglas had seized and imprisoned one

M'Clellan, of Bombie, and threatened to bring him to trial and execution by virtue of his feudal jurisdiction and authority. Sir Patrick Grey, commander of the king's body-guard, and uncle of M'Clellan, obtained from James the Second at Stirling a warrant for the delivery of the prisoner. On Grey's arrival at Douglas's Castle of Thrave, Douglas, suspecting his errand, invited him to dine, with the remark that it was "ill-talking between a full man and a fasting." Grey accepted the invitation, and, in the meanwhile, the unfortunate M'Clellan was, by the grim earl's orders, led out into the court-yard and summarily beheaded. After dinner Grey proceeded to business, and presented the king's warrant. "You are too late, Sir Patrick!" said Douglas. "Your sister's son lies in the court, without his head. *That* I cannot spare you, but you are welcome to the dead body." Grey sprang suddenly to his steed, and vowing revenge for the cruel and dastardly outrage, rode off, pursued by some of Douglas's men until within a few miles of Edinburgh. He lived to be revenged, and in a manner which he could not have anticipated. The king was highly incensed, not only at the murder, which was but the climax of many other atrocities, but at the confederacy into which Douglas had entered with the Earls of Crawford, Ross, Moray, and other great nobles, against his crown and authority. But Douglas was too powerful a person to be lightly assailed; and at a loyal council it was resolved to offer him an amnesty for all past offences, if he would renew his oath of allegiance, and break off his connexion with the confederacy. For this purpose he was invited to visit the king at Stirling, with promises of a hospitable and a friendly reception, and provided with a writ of safe-conduct. Douglas was strongly dissuaded by his friends against trusting in the king's word, but, confiding in the writ, he set forth, attended by his trustiest clansmen and several hundred retainers, all well mounted and armed, and arrived at Stirling, on the 20th of February, 1451. His followers were lodged in the town, and himself and nearest kinsmen, to the number of about twenty, in the castle. Everything went on smoothly and quietly between the king and his powerful subject. They dined and drank together, sat, and walked, and conversed amicably, always avoiding, however, the main subject at issue between them. On the second day the king gave a great state banquet to the council, at which, after the removal of the cloth, the matter of the

confederacy, of which Douglas was supposed to be the head and the heart, was brought forward and discussed. The discussion grew warm, and being shared by too many disputants, the king suddenly asked Douglas to retire with him into an adjoining room—a bedroom—to discourse with him privately. Here the king endeavoured to persuade him to return to his allegiance, and to break the bond into which he had entered with the disaffected nobles. Douglas defended himself quietly against some of the charges made against him; alleged his feudal right to punish his enemies within his own jurisdiction; and as regarded his bond or compact with Crawford and other nobles, maintained that he had as much right to make compacts as the king himself. The king lost his temper, and in a fit of rage drew his dagger, and exclaimed, "Traitor! if thou wilt not break the bond, my dagger shall," and stabbed him to the heart. Douglas attempted to return the blow, but in vain. The lords of the council, hearing the scuffle, rushed in, all armed, and Douglas fell to the ground, stabbed in twenty-six places, the finishing blow being given by Sir Patrick Grey, who smashed in his head with a pole-axe. This done, the body was thrown out of the little bedroom window into the court below, where it was immediately buried. This room was almost wholly destroyed by fire a few years ago, but has been restored in the exact style of the original. In 1797, a skeleton of a man was found in the spot indicated by tradition as that in which Douglas was buried.

Another room in Stirling Castle, which has associations of a pleasanter character, is that which was the study of James the Sixth, when a child, under the tutorship of the celebrated Buchanan. It was here that the future king of Great Britain and Ireland clomb painfully up the hill of knowledge, and that when he was remiss, or idle, or stupid, which often happened, a scapegoat was found for his offences in the shape of a little boy of his own age, who received the whippings that ought of right to have been administered to the royal offender. It is related that Buchanan, losing faith in this vicarious method of punishment, one day, when he was more than usually aggravated by the inattention or stupidity of his pupil, administered the treatment to his royal pupil himself with a force and decisiveness which made the young king roar as lustily as if he had been a small Etonian, or a parochial charity boy, undergoing the same penance. The

king's governess, the Countess of Mar, rushed into the room with fury in her eyes, and seizing James from his castigator, asked the schoolmaster savagely, "How he dared to lay his hands on the Lord's anointed?" Buchanan's reply has been duly preserved for the laughter of posterity, but does not exactly suit the decorum of these papers, or of modern parlance.

Adieu, fair Snowdoun, with thy towers high,
Thy Chapel Royal, Park, and Table Round,
May, June, and July would I dwell in thee!

Repeating these lines from old Sir David Lindesay of the Mount, we leave Stirling Castle, and take the road for Callander and the Trosachs.

MY TOY.

I MADE the plaything myself you see,
I limned it in colours fair,
I gave to the eye its loving depth,
I smoothed its sheeny hair.

All for the sake of a false sweet word,
By the light of a smile repaid,
I decked my idol in beautiful guise,
And knelt at the shrine I had made.

My tranquil days, my dreamless nights,
I laid at my darling's feet;
I said no other hand was strong,
No other voice was sweet.

The old beliefs, the world's set laws,
I broke them one by one,
And turned to my false god's smile to praise
The ruin I had done.

Slowly, and surely, and fatally
The glory dimmed away;
I knew my dream was nothingness,
I knew my gold was clay.

Yet half in love, despairing half,
To the altar steps I clung,
Who else but I knew what costly freight
To our frail cable hung?

But the clasping hands grew tired out.
The jar, the chill, the strain!
No love could smooth—no faith could mend.
The last strand snapped in twain.

Free, free, and, oh, so lonely,
By the empty shrine I stand,
And pity my own unglamoured sight,
And pity my bleeding hand.

For, oh, with awakened power they ache,
The eyes that too clearly see,
And I think the scars on the fingers left
Will never be healed for me.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

"REQUISITIONING."

THE Germans as a rule, but the Bavarians in particular, revel in this word just at present. What is a "requisition?" It is evidently derived from the verb "to require." Now to require is to order a thing to be given—in fact, a German requisition is a pretty way of borrowing without payment, or, in other words, of stealing. "Convey, the wise it call." To

give an example. A clever Bavarian will go to a French maire with a slip of paper, signed by his commander, in which it is stated that the bearer of the paper wants a horse and cart. The maire refers the Bavarian to some unfortunate villager who is luckless enough to possess such luxuries. The Bavarian taps at the door. The villager opens it. The Bavarian presents the slip of paper with the maire's signature. The villager's face falls, the Bavarian's becomes proportionately beaming. "Ah, monsieur!" says the Frenchman, "this is my only horse." The Bavarian shrugs his shoulders, not understanding a single word. The Frenchman continues his palaver. The Bavarian shrugs his shoulders again, and mutters. The Frenchman gets frantic, and gesticulates wildly. The Bavarian gets cross, and begins to swear. At last, seeing that gentle persuasion avails not, the Bavarian lowers his bayonet, and pronounces the two words, "Vorwärts!" "Marsch!" Now the Frenchman just understands these two words, and, with the additional persuasion of the lowered bayonet, he is not long in bringing forth his cart and horse. The Bavarian mounts, having previously, before the Frenchman's eyes, cut a stick, as thick as his brawny arm can wield, which he does very deliberately, as he is annoyed, in all probability, with the apparent disinclination of the Frenchman to let him have his cart. The poor Frenchman raises his eyes to heaven, mentally noting the thickness of the Bavarian's whip, and wondering what effect it will have on his luckless horse's flanks. The Bavarian does not leave him long in doubt; whack, down comes the stick; the horse commences a trot; the Bavarian is master of the situation; his rugged nature is thoroughly thawed, and he turns round to look at his friend. "Bon jour, monsieur!" he says, in a most annoyingly chuckling manner. The Frenchman does not return the adieu in an equally jocular way. "Monsieur, au revoir!" he says, sedately, as he stands with his hands in his pockets, looking the picture of impotent rage. Ah! he hopes to see his cart and horse the next day; of course he expects to find his horse tired to death and his cart damaged; but let us follow the cart and horse, and see what happens to them. The Bavarian, not content with the horse trotting, makes the poor brute break into a gallop, which continually increases, until he gets up to the Bavarian corps. Immediately the rear rank catches sight of the cart, with a comrade inside, it runs through

the ranks, "The cart is coming!" It reaches the captain's ears; he turns in his saddle, and commands his company to halt. The men have been tramping for several hours along a dusty road, and as the cart comes up a sigh of relief is heard all round as the shoulder-strap of the knapsack is unbuckled, and the heavy, cumbersome weight is slung into the cart. Fifty knapsacks are now in it; the crowd round the cart is thicker than ever; two men are stacking the pile, which still increases. At last the Frenchman's horse totters on its hoofs, being almost taken off its legs by the weight; so, not to be beaten, and to keep the equilibrium, a fat Bavarian gets on the poor beast's back, and the company proceeds. After a weary day's work the Frenchman's horse and cart arrive at the Bavarian bivouac; here, if there are any oats or hay to be "required," the horse gets a feed; if not, he may nibble a little grass, or a few leaves, and he proceeds the next morning with the Bavarian knapsacks, plus the fat Bavarian, as before. At night, again, the unfortunate beast stops in the pouring rain, attached to a tree. He gets some oats, and starts for a third day's march, as before. Suddenly the company comes to a halt. A battery of artillery in front has lost a horse from fatigue. A new horse must be forthcoming. The captain orders his company to shoulder their knapsacks once more. They don't do it very willingly, but the order is soon obeyed. The fat Bavarian slowly descends, the horse is taken out of the cart, the cart is left by the roadside, and the French horse, accustomed to the cart or plough, is suddenly converted into a Prussian artillery horse. Here the French peasant's chance of getting his horse back ends. The animal now gets well fed and groomed, has a dapper Prussian, with his burnished helmet, instead of the poor French peasant, as its master. Such is the end of a Bavarian requisition in many instances.

Wherever the Bavarians come they sweep the place clean of everything. They remind me always of a visitation of locusts. One meets them on the road to Paris with a couple of champagne bottles slung at each side. If one goes south, there are more Bavarians; if one goes north, there they are again. As for their constitutions and powers of endurance, they resemble bears more than human beings. I saw a Prussian and a Bavarian bivouac near together, one bitterly cold night, before Paris. It was so

wretchedly cold that, despite the bivouac fires, the Prussians were running about to keep themselves warm; the Bavarians, on the other hand, were lying on the ground, and looked, from the way they slept and snored, as if they would never wake again, showing that they, at any rate, were not much affected by the cold.

I myself once or twice made a requisition, and one of these was the funniest adventure in which I ever participated. It was a fine day in the middle of October, and La Belle France, though at war, still looked charming; the sky was blue, and the atmosphere serene and beautiful. I had been intrusted by a Prussian dignitary, near Paris, with a special mission, which, although it had little or no military interest, was exciting enough because it had to be carried out amid such stirring scenes as war alone can produce. As I jumped into my saddle, an officer in Brunswick uniform, in fact, a Black Brunswicker, dashed up to my side; he was an acquaintance of mine, and we had met before at a mutual friend's bivouac fire.

"Whither away so early?" was his question.

"To Trilpont," was my answer.

"You'll find the bridges all blown away!"

"If I do not find Prussian pontoon bridges already in their places I shall be very much surprised," I said; "and shall have to make my horse pass the Seine, as I am bound for the other side."

"Ah, yes, they may have finished a bridge by now, certainly," was his rejoinder. "I have nothing to do for a couple of hours, will you take me for a companion de voyage?"

"Most willingly," was my answer, so on we rode together. Our route took us along a straight chaussée, with a double row of young lime-trees. It was early morning; the telegraph wires along the route had been cut and hung in festoons, which gave an air of dreariness and desolation to the chaussée itself. Every now and then we would come to a little wooden bridge, which the poor Frenchmen had cut or blown up, hoping thereby to impede a little the progress of the victorious German army; a hope that has always been signally disappointed. The actual German army does not arrive at these little bridges until long after their pioneers have completed new ones. Great bridges, and great tunnels, have, as a rule, been spared, while little bridges have been blown up; or, what has been still more foolish and futile, wherever

there has been a bit of paved road, the French seemed to have set to work to unpave twenty yards or so, or, if there be no pavement, to have dug little holes here and there in it. Now there are some troops in the German army who have greatly distinguished themselves in this campaign, and none more so than the impudent Uhlans, as they are called by their countrymen. These Uhlans, or Lancers, being light cavalry, scour the country days before the actual army comes through it. Now Uhlans naturally find a dug-up road uncomfortable for their horses to amble over, so they go at once to the nearest village, and drive every single man, woman, and child out of it to mend the road, and stand round them with lowered lances until the work is done. If a Frenchman murmurs at having to work for the enemy, he gets one of two sentences from the Uhlan thrown in his teeth; one is, "C'est à la guerre comme à la guerre," or, "C'est la guerre, mais la guerre est très-triste," these being the Uhlan's pet sentences. Well, we passed many a newly constructed little wooden bridge, and many a little patch of paving-stones newly laid down, and arrived at Trilpont at last.

Here a sight greeted us which we did not expect to find. The French had really done something in the way of stopping the Germans' progress. Of two large stone bridges, one, a railway bridge, had lost both its arches; the other, for passenger traffic, had lost but one. The mighty blocks of stone were lying in heaps, and the waters of the blue Seine were foaming over them, making cascades and whirlpools; they were grand ruins. My companion's words were, "schwere noth." Yes, it must indeed have been a "dreadful necessity" to have caused the Frenchmen to commit such frightful devastation against their own beautiful bridges. There was a pontoon bridge, and a German sentry at each end, to keep the pontoon boats from being too heavily laden by traffic; only one cart was allowed to pass at a time.

Here my companion turned his horse's head back again, and I continued my journey. I rode quickly along, for the little town was some way off. At last I arrived. My mission was to take some twenty wounded from a house they were in, and bring them to the hospital prepared for them, which I had just left. On my arrival, I presented my card to the chief man in the town, who was the maire and notary as well, and told him my mission. He said

he would speak to the doctor of the place, and that they would see if they could manage it the next day for me; but of course they must have a debate about it first.

Now I was very loth to wait till this good Frenchman had got a sufficient number of his countrymen together, and had time to name a president, &c., and as it was but eleven o'clock, I felt very much inclined to get back by night to the place from which I had started. I therefore merely bowed to the maire's decision and left. I remounted my black horse, and rode to the nearest Prussian bivouac, which I had previously passed; here I found a company of Uhlans. I dismounted, and touching my cap to the officer, I asked him if he would give me a couple of Uhlans to help me make some requisitions; at the same time I showed him what my errand was. He was a delightful fellow; he had as handsome a face and figure as could be desired; his little black moustache was twisted fiercely upward, and he looked a thorough soldier from top to toe.

"Ah, you are English!" he said. "My dear mother is English, so we must shake hands. Come, sit down, and we will have breakfast together. Karlofski, bring us something to eat, and tell unter officier Kummer I want him."

The under officer made his appearance.

"Tell off two men for requisitions. Let them have their horses saddled directly."

Karlofski now made his appearance with some sausage and bread, and a bottle of wine, old Burgundy.

"Ah!" said my companion, "I have a treat for you in this wine. I 'required' it yesterday at a gentleman's château. The butler, of course, said he had nothing; but we have not been in France for ten weeks without knowing that a French 'no,' and a German 'yes,' mean something about the same thing, so I said to him, my friend, let me look into your cellar. The butler, who was very obsequious, complacently lit a candle and showed me into a vault. The vault certainly had as clean a conscience of having anything to drink in it as I at that moment had, but I noticed a peculiar look the good butler gave at an apparently newly built wall, so calling out for Karlofski, I told him to bring something to knock a wall down with. To make a long story short, we found as good a stock of wine in this soi-disant empty cellar as any of us have ever tasted; and this is part of the contents," he added, as he held up to the light a bumper of Burgundy.

After we had finished the repast, and had taken down one another's names and addresses, and had exchanged eternal vows of friendship, I remounted my horse, and, with the two Uhlans at my side, started to make my first requisition.

It was a glorious trot we had before we arrived at a village some eight miles off. As the women and children saw us they ran into their houses; they don't like the look of those lour lances with the dirty little black and white flag. The few men who were lounging about cast glances of the bitterest hate at us. The Uhlans take no notice of sour looks, except now and then they give a little derisive laugh. I now tapped with the handle of my riding-whip at a villager's door. A thin, sour-looking Frenchman came to answer my summons.

"My friend," I said, "I have come to require your horse and cart, to transport some wounded from the houses they are now in to a military hospital."

"Monsieur," said the Frenchman wringing his hands, "je n'ai rien de tout, de tout, de tout; the Prussians have stolen all that I had."

I repeated this to the Uhlans.

"Ach! herr, never believe a Frenchman," said one of the Uhlans.

Thereupon I insisted on having the key of the outhouse in order to look for myself, but my Frenchman declined to let me have it. So I gave a Uhlman the order to break the door open. There was a cart; and, in going through a door, I found two horses quietly munching oats. I left the Uhlans to see the harnessing done to their satisfaction, and went back to the house to tell the man that, although no doubt he did not know it, a stray cart and two horses had singularly enough found their way into his stables. He received this piece of good news in gloomy silence. I said, "Should you wish these strange horses to come back into your stables to-morrow, you will either drive them to the place I want them to go to yourself, or you will send some one with them, for you may rest assured your friends the Uhlans won't trouble themselves about seeing that you get the cart and animals back." The Frenchman saw the justice of my remark, called a hump-backed son, and told him to drive the cart where the brigands wanted it, and then slammed the door in my face. I took no notice. The poor French have enough to try them.

I had made a beginning. I then went to

the next most likely person in the village, and tapped at his door.

"Well, monsieur," I said, as he opened it, "I suppose at this juncture of affairs you, like all other Frenchmen, have got rien de tout, de tout, de tout."

Now the Frenchman seemed highly delighted at finding a foreigner use the very words that he meant to have used himself, and he repeated them slowly and deliberately.

I suggested, "Not even a cart and horse?"

He raised his eyes to heaven, "Mais non, monsieur! Les Prussiens!"

Unluckily for him, just at that moment his horse in the barn neighed, and prevented him adding the other half of what might be termed a slight perversion of the truth. He forthwith drew the bolt of his stable-door, and, as if he had expected our coming, there was a horse, and also a cart, quite ready, with a sack of oats inside it. That grain the owner wanted to remove, but a Uhlman assured him it was not necessary.

A third cart was given in such a different spirit that I must certainly record the fact. A poor old peasant, with white hair, was standing by his door, when I asked him if he could let me have his cart to transport some wounded.

"Certainly, sir. Ah, les pauvres blessés, les pauvres blessés! This is a frightful war, sir. Shall I drive the cart myself?"

I said, "Have you no son?"

"Yes, sir, I have two; but they are Francs-tireurs, and I almost think they must be dead now, sir. One did say he meant to join the army of Lyons; but since they left home, after the news of the battle of Sedan, I have not heard a word of them."

I said, "Can you stay out from home till noon to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir. I must tell my wife, though, and put on my great-coat."

I now had three carts, and at the next village I got four more, and then started to fetch the wounded.

It was now past one, and I had a long way to go; however, at four I reached the little town, and having straw put into each cart, the wounded were, one after another, brought out, and placed on it. How thankful the poor fellows were to get away from that fever-stricken town! They gulped down the fresh air, and seemed to think that their recovery was certain now.

The carts had all their allowance of

wounded, so I told one Uhlán to head the cavalcade, and the other to bring up the rear. I rode on ahead to find the good maire. Just as I turned the corner I met that very individual. I drew up by his side, and entered into conversation with him. He told me, with great impression, that he would soon be in a position to help me "evacuate" my wounded, and that, as he must be away the next day, he had asked some one to be president of the meeting, and they would, no doubt, provide me with carts. At that moment the Uhlán heading the cavalcade came round the corner, and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven carts followed; my second Uhlán brought up the rear. The maire looked at them complacently, thinking, no doubt, that they were wounded from another village; but when they had passed I bid him good-bye, and thanked him for his civility, but hoped he would not think of troubling *messieurs les citoyens* to meet for a debate, as that was scarcely necessary now, and then rode after the wounded, leaving the maire looking perfectly bewildered.

The carts in this instance were all duly returned to their respective owners, and I got a certificate for the old man, to say that his cart was not to be required of him, unless under extremely exceptional circumstances.

Another requisition I made was not so pleasant an affair. At Nanteuil, or in the immediate neighbourhood, the French had blown up a tunnel, so that it was no slight nuisance to find, on arrival at this place with sundry packages of luggage, that there were no means of further conveyance. Yet such was once my luck. Two young Prussian officers, each with a portmanteau, were in the same plight. I had a horse; they were lieutenants in the artillery and line, and had none. Nanteuil at present consists of half a dozen houses, with nobody and nothing in them.

"Well," I said, "how shall we manage to get on to La Ferté sous Jouarre?"

"We can't leave our luggage here, or else we might all get on your horse," suggested one of the young lieutenants. "I've done that constantly before. One horse, that was known to be very frisky, was quite tamed after a ride three of us gave him from Sedan to a village twenty miles off."

Just then a railway official came up to us, and, touching his cap, said: "It's a pity you were not here a quarter of an

hour ago, sir; a beautiful open carriage brought some wounded here, but that's already started back."

"A beautiful open carriage!" I ejaculated.

I said no more. One bound and I was in the saddle, and the next minute I was dashing along the road like an aide-de-camp. Past signboards and milestones, I seemed to fly, and at last, at a corner of the road, I caught a glimpse of the beautiful carriage, and I think the coachman caught a glimpse of me, for the carriage was going at a tremendous pace. On I flew. The peasants looked scared as I passed, no doubt thinking I was followed, and was a deserter or prisoner in plain clothes. Still I plied my whip, and dashed the spurs into the poor beast's reeking flanks; at last, turning a corner of the road, I found the man not more than a hundred yards in front, but he was driving like a very Jehu, and his pair of horses were good ones.

"Arrêtez," I cried, but the man either did not or would not hear. A minute more I was alongside. "Stop, you rascal!" I cried.

"No, I won't," he said, sullenly.

"You won't," I said, drawing my revolver, "if you don't, I'll shoot your horses and you after them." He trembled and turned pale, and drew up. "Now, back you go! and if you don't go as quickly as you came, I'll still carry out my threat. You impudent rascal, if you had stopped when I first called to you I would have paid you for your trouble, now I require you. To whom do those horses belong?"

"To the master of the Trois Rois, at Meaux."

"That's the very hotel we want to go to," I mentally noted. When I got back I found my companions quietly munching sausage and bread near the place where the train had stopped. I told them what had been necessary in order to induce the Frenchman to return.

"Well," said one of them, after eyeing me for a minute or so, "and what would you have done if he had not drawn up when you ordered?"

"Shot one of his horses," I answered.

"And after that?"

"Why, as soon as he had taken that one out of the harness, and began to proceed with the other, I should have shot that."

"And what about the man?"

"Oh, I should have marched him back to you, holding the revolver in his ear all the way."

"Donner und blitzen," said the lieutenant, "you ought to have been a soldier."

So we all got on to Meaux, and slept at the Hôtel des Trois Rois.

BORROWING TROUBLE.

THAT habit of mind which we express by the phrase, "meeting trouble half-way," the Americans describe as "borrowing trouble;" and their formula has over ours at least the advantage of greater brevity. Borrowing trouble it shall be then for the moment; the thing itself, not the name by which we call it, being that at which we wish to have our fling.

Some people—and those unfortunately not a few—live in the perpetual employment of borrowing trouble. They lay a life-long mortgage on their happiness, and occupy their time in paying a fancy interest, and a heavy one, for their uncomfortable loan. Anything serves them as an occasion for making themselves miserable; and their indulgence in gloomy anticipations of the worst that can befall becomes at last a trick of the mind, which they cannot overcome if they would. For the mind gets its "tricks" like the body, and they are just as difficult to overcome. No illness, according to them, can end otherwise than fatally; no money pinch can be got over save by a bankruptcy, with exceptional disgrace; no trivial misunderstanding can be healed before it becomes an irreconcilable breach; and they have always sorrowful convictions as to the present unsatisfactory state of your soul, and its ultimate destination is uncomfortably sure unless you make a complete change in your opinions, your actions, and your beliefs. Their heaven has no sun, or one they see only through smoked glass; their songs are mournful threnodies; their dramas sad and dreary tragedies; their very affections are so many poisoned roots of sorrow; and their troubles are multiplied by just so many as they have friends and acquaintances in whose welfare they are interested. If kindly natured and not saturnine, their whole energy goes into pity, till their compassion becomes a vice, and their sympathy an additional burden on the heavy weight already borne by those they love. For though they mean to help in bearing the packet of miseries of those who are heavily laden, they only make it denser and harder to carry by the weight of their own gloom. If they are mothers, they see nothing of the joy, the elasticity,

the unanticipative thoughtlessness which neither "looks before nor after," the happy inconsequence of childhood; they take to heart only its troubles shaped out of the hard tasks of school, the tyranny of the elders—whether as big boys who make little ones fag for them, or as big girls who take away the little girls' toys, or as nurses and teachers who tyrannise over and oppress both big and little impartially; the troubles that have to come from inevitable ailments, and from the gradual initiation into the sorrowful realities of life. They pity children and young people so much—they say mournfully: Poor little things; life is so hard on them! And the shrill cadence of childish laughter, coming in with the sunshine and the song of birds and the scent of summer flowers, does not lighten their gloomy picture, nor destroy their melancholy theory.

Nothing can do that, for even the absolute present reality of joy is to them only an hallucination, a delusion, which must before long fade away into thin air; and blackened ashes, where had once been the glow and warmth of fire—or a fire that only seemed and was not true—are the utmost they can allow as possible to mankind. If a girl is married to the man of her choice, they sigh over the disillusionment that must come, prophesying evil things for the close of the day that has dawned so brightly. Others have married with just as high hopes and fond hearts, they say, and look where they are now! And they instance A., and B., and C., who have made notorious shipwreck of their matrimonial happiness, and speculate on the probabilities of the like unskilful pilotage in the present case. They are generally sure of diseased blood on one side or the other; for the number of people of their acquaintance who have hereditary madness, or a decided consumptive tendency, gout by inheritance, and paralysis stealing round the corner, is marvellous in proportion to the few whom they allow to be thoroughly "clean." If they cannot designate unwholesome members of the family by name, and let you into the secret of their doctor's fees and their chemist's bills, they fall foul of the bride's notorious silliness, of the bridegroom's well-known temper; of her absurd ignorance of life and house-keeping, of his monstrous extravagance or revolting meanness; and they are sure that, somehow, by the failure of health, happiness, or prosperity, there is no good in store for them.

But nothing of this is said maliciously. Quite the contrary. They are honestly grieved at the dark days to come in the future, and would if they could avert the evil omen. But what can they do? Cas-sandras who cry aloud and prophesy, they have only the gift of prevision not of prevention; they can but sympathise, they cannot hinder. They are the skeletons at every feast where they are invited; and write up with their awful fingers the *Memento Mori*, which is their version of *Salve*, on the threshold of every chamber they inhabit; yet they are not content with their perpetual reminder of death, which is bad enough in itself, but they add to it the still more desolate rider, "Forget not to suffer beforehand."

There is no hope growing in the path where these people take their melancholy walks, and if there are possible dangers in the far future, however remote, however only possible, only contingent, we may be sure they will expect to meet them now on the very instant, face to face, though they are just as unlikely to be found as a wild beast at liberty in London. There is the possible trouble; there is the wild beast in its cage; but that the sorrow should be stalking in gloomy majesty along the highway now at this present time is no more likely than that the lions and the tigers of the Zoological Gardens should be found meandering among the Sunday loungers up the broad-walk. If an epidemic comes into their neighbourhood, they and theirs die of it daily. A finger-ache heralds the advent of rheumatic fever, a slight huskiness is the first symptom of diphtheria; if a child is flushed with play it has the scarlet fever without the smallest doubt, and the idea of escaping the prevailing scourge, or of pulling through, if caught, never enters their heads. If anything merely mental could kill, it would be their wretched forebodings of death and disaster; and if "germs" fructified by attraction, the houses of the borrowers of trouble would never be swept clean of disease. They are good customers, however, to the chemists and the vendors of quack medicines and preventives; for, cowards in all else, they are brave in their adoption of new remedies—their special character of mind for the most part inclining them to a belief in specifics with mysterious properties undemonstrable by science. In ruder ages they would have been "held" by witchcraft, and "released" by magic. Now they are fain to content

themselves with nostrums which work wonders by properties unappreciable by analyst or physicist; and when you say to them, "They cannot; there is no such property contained in a bushelful of your medicines," they only answer "They do," and instance to you cases wherein, to their knowledge, miracles have been wrought. What can you say to such reasoners? If Tenterden steeple is the cause of Goodwin Sands, the relation between architecture and geology is, to say the least of it, obscure. And if it is really any comfort to the poor borrowers of trouble, carrying their load in the desert of their own making, to build their Zoar on the shaky foundations of quackery, it would be uncharitable to prevent them, seeing that you have nothing else to offer which they would accept in its stead.

The world is full to them of snares and pitfalls; and, as parents, they borrow trouble in their daughters' good looks, their sons' gallant bearing, and the evident admiration both excite in the minds of their young companions. Their daughters especially are the subjects of their dread; and there is not a young man within a mile of them who is not a lender of the trouble they so eagerly borrow, from their conviction that he is a wolf, whose sole design it is to devour at a sitting the poor lamb bleating its innocent response to his crafty address. All balls and evening parties, all picnics and croquet meetings, are the lending offices whence they carry off large sums of borrowed trouble, which they dole out in separate portions to their belongings. Their sons will be sure to flirt with the wrong girls, their daughters will be as sure to bleat to the wolves and not to the sheep-dogs; they will have a fever from over dancing, and a chill from eating ices; they will spoil their new dresses and make them unfit for Mrs. A's "small and early" next week; they will be ill from to-night's excitement, and to-morrow are coming to dinner two eligible, if slightly grizzled, sheep-dogs, whom they wish devoutly their lambs would affect. Whatever trouble is afloat they borrow largely, as they sit on the side benches, like so many descendants of the Giant Despair, holding out both hands, not for gold, but for misery.

When their sons are men enough to leave home, the same habit of mind which has done its best to cripple their boyhood follows them—happily for all concerned no longer able to influence the life of those for whom their fear has done its loving worst.

As boys, the poor borrowers of trouble found an inexhaustible fund of pain in the vigour, the energy, the daring, the very education of youth. Not a gun was ever handled which was not sure to shoot the owner instead of the birds at which it was levelled; not a horse was mounted which did not carry in the saddle a fractured limb or a broken neck; every boat was a witch's bowl with a hole in her; and all athletic sports were but disguised devices for smashed shins, broken blood-vessels, and future heart disease. Study was the direct road to madness; the navy meant shipwreck and death by drowning at the first stiff breeze; the army was a certain consignment of so much precious flesh and blood to the path of a bullet; the medical profession was the surest way to get typhus fever at the first opportunity; the law was perhaps physically safe, but the law leaves no hands clean and no code of morals straight. The Church alone was an absolute haven among all this wild war of differing dangers; and in the Church, when once the debt of trouble borrowed on the temptations of college life was redeemed, there was not so much to fear. And if we knew the secret causes by which some lives have been manipulated, we should find that the reason why certain men, with no kind of vocation for their profession, were doomed to cassock and bands and sleepy sermons to simple village folk, instead of to a pair of epaulettes and a dashing charge at the head of their troop, was in the woful fears of the parental borrower of trouble, in the days when the man was but a boy, and his profession was decided before he had come to his own mastership.

If the borrowers of trouble did not insist on sharing and passing on their loan, it would not so much signify. Folks are free to make themselves unhappy in any way that strikes their fancy, but the mischief lies in communicating to others this unhappiness elaborated in their own private crucible—this trouble borrowed of false fears and sorrows that do not as yet exist, and that may not see the light at all. But happiness is impossible with this preventively grieving race. They know joy only by name, as a fleeting, deceitful, and destructive hussy, and they choose care, in his blackest garb, as their rider en croupe. Like Trappists, they dig their own graves while they are still walking about the earth as men, not crawling beneath it as worms; and they keep their most precious jewels in

a coffin as a casket. As if the absolute was not bad enough, and the punishment that overtakes the unconscious strays of us poor dazed wayfarers not hard enough to bear, and certain enough to come—as if the sadness inherited of life itself, and which none of us can avoid, was not deep enough, the mystery of sorrow which none of us can fathom or forego not mournful enough, without adding to it all by our own act, piling the Pelion of unnecessary fears on the Ossa of inevitable pain! But no reasoning will teach these eager borrowers of trouble to wait until the time of trial actually comes, or convince them that there are two ways across the desert, and that the chances of escape or destruction are pretty nearly equal, if only one will believe it—the preponderance, indeed, lying to the side of escape, else what would have become of society and the human family had it not been so? They will not believe in the religion of hope, and the ethics of cheerfulness are as pagan reasonings to them. They are always so convinced of disasters beforehand that, when a catastrophe does really come, one would imagine it must be a relief to them, haunted as they are by vague shapes of dread which beset them like ghosts in the night. At least this is real, this is something tangible, and not a mere dreamy vision; there is no longer that terrible balance between hope and fear, the possible and the actual, which makes the brain sometimes uncertain of itself, and shakes the nerves like the leaves of an aspen-tree set in the current of a passing storm. When the worst has come, there is the repose which follows on certainty; and the sleep which comes after torture is none the less sleep and refreshment, because preceded by agony. So, when the borrowers of trouble are called on to pay their loan, and their vague fear is translated into a living fact, they are spared any further pain of uncertainty. And, as one's imaginary evil is seldom topped by the reality, for a time at least they have respite from their dread, and find their real trouble less terrible than their fancied one—their payment of sorrow of less amount than that trouble they so needlessly borrowed.

But indeed the worst use that man can make of his time is to borrow trouble in any shape. It is quite bad enough to spend it in tears and despair when it comes of its own irrepressible accord: until then, let us keep our hands clear of it, and if we must borrow anything,

borrow joy and hope, even if we have to pay back the loan with disappointment and with grieving.

IN THE PENGUIN'S ARMS.

I HAVE never been able in my heart to feel any dislike to those children who, when you have been telling them an elaborate fairy tale, and have wound up in the most successful manner with wedding favours, and enormous castles, and living happy ever after, for the good people, and with a sprinkling of dragons and blue fire for the bad ones, always ask, "Well, and what then?" They decline to accept your peroration, they want to know what happened after those events which you have taken such pains to explain. And as, of course, it is impossible to tell them, and not merely impossible but injudicious (as you would probably have to recount how the people whom you left happily married fought with each other very soon, and were found in the Divorce Court, and how the wicked man hood-winked the dragon, and got out of the blue fire, and made his fortune as a "promoter" on the Stock Exchange, and is now churchwarden of his parish, and an ornament of society), you are compelled to put an unfriendly termination to the discussion, and shuffle your questioners off to bed. I suppose my disinclination to be hard upon these inquisitive children springs from a fellow-feeling with them. I, too, object to conventional endings in any shape, and, with the children, ask, "What then?" When the novelist, at the three hundred and twenty-third page of his third volume, shows me Angelina lying on Edwin's breast, and says in his concluding paragraph, "His strong arm was around her, her head was pillowed on his bosom; after all her troubles and vicissitudes the Wanderer of Walthamstow had reached that haven at last. Need we say more?" I feel inclined to cry, "Yes! Tell us what the Wanderer of Walthamstow did a few months afterwards, when Edwin took to drinking, and when his strong arm was laid about her, instead of around her. Or, on the other hand, what Edwin did, when the W. of W. began to be very much bored by his milk-and-water sentimental goodness, and wanted to wander about Walthamstow again, in search, perhaps, of the wicked nobleman from whose machinations Edwin had rescued her!"

At the theatre, too, I am not content,

just before the fall of the curtain, with the assurance of the heroine that, if it be the wish of their kind friends, she, and the rest of the company, "will drain the Seven Vials of Violence" every evening. I want to see the effect of those they have already drained; I want to see the comic man slanging the heavy father for having "cut him out of a bit of fat" by speaking "before his cue;" I should like to hear the leading lady upbraiding the walking gentleman for having been too much of a walking gentleman upon the skirt of her dress; I am curious about the parts played by most of the performers in private, so very different sometimes to those which they play before the public. I linger the last to see the lights being turned out one by one, to see the old women appearing in the slips, to hear the box-keepers coughing behind the mufflers in which they are wrapping themselves, to see the brown holland draperies enshrouding, after a ghostly fashion, the bravery of the crimson and gold decorations, finally, to see the great curtain raised again, to mark the fireman's advance towards the orchestra, with his snake-like coil of hose, to feel the fresh rush of air which passes through the deserted house, and then to take my leave reluctantly, saying to myself, "What then?"

Scores of places are there which I love to picture to myself, in what I may call their "well, what then?" state. The parish church of Crathie, for example. That must be a curious sight after its three or four months of aristocratic congregation. The royal pew, with the sovereign and the princes and princesses, the lords and ladies in waiting, the equerries, and the gold sticks and silver sticks, a little further off the gillies and the magnificent, full-fed flunkies, as much in the background as their own size and the smallness of the building will permit. The Abergeldie pew, with its complement of royalty; the Corndarvon pew, with its noble sportsmen and high-bred ladies; the other seats crammed with tourists rapidly resolving themselves into a stiff-necked generation in their endeavours to catch a glimpse of their fellow-worshippers, and the pulpit occupied by some famous theologian or preacher of renown. In the deep, dark winter time, when royalty with its retinue is at Osborne, and the fine ladies and gentlemen in their English homes; when the tourists have exchanged their suits of dittos for homely Oxford mixture, and their

alpenstocks for steel pens; when the renowned theologian is delighting the hearts of Edinburgh congregations, or demolishing the theories of some sceptical antagonist in his snug library in Moray-place, that is the time to ask, "Well, and what then?" I picture to myself the little church surrounded by snow, which has just been sufficiently cleared away to make a path from the wicket-gate to the porch, its officiating minister, a plain, honest, God-fearing man, who has worn away the best years of his life in the unpretending, ugly little manse hard by, its congregation consisting of one or two farmers, a few shepherds, and a dozen old women dotted about here and there, but scrupulously keeping clear of the seats which in other times are occupied by the great folk. No royalty, no aristocracy, no mention in the Court Circular for Crathie in its out-of-the-season or "well, what then?" time.

I have recently had an opportunity of studying what it is now the fashion to call the "inner life" of one or two well-known places, in their out-of-the-season garb. The force of circumstances lately necessitated my quartering myself at the little Welsh town of Ap Slammer for a few days, and, on my arrival in the town, I proceeded straight to the Penguin's Arms. Ap Slammer, as is well known to all who have explored that lovely neighbourhood, is generally looked upon as the headquarters for the North Wales district, the place where the heavy luggage is left to be called for on return, and whence the tourists start, knapsack-girt and pole-bearing, as earnestly in search of the picturesque as Dr. Syntax on his celebrated tour, but with much greater chance of having their desires gratified. It is a wretched little place enough, with a population which has given up its pretty national dress, but retains its hideous national language; with a long straggling street, full of wretched little shops, but with two or three very good hotels. Of these, I understood that the Penguin's Arms was the best, and to the Penguin's Arms, as I have said, I drove straight from the railway station. The streets of Ap Slammer were not more deserted than those of any country town of the same size, and the walls were radiant with red posting-bills, announcing the advent of some comic singer and his troupe, so that it was not until I arrived at the hotel door that I began to realise the fact that the season of Ap Slammer was entirely over, and that I should have an oppor-

tunity of seeing it in its "well, what then?" state.

The door of the hotel was shut, but it opened as the omnibus, of which I was the sole occupant, drove up, and the stout waiter in the dirty apron, jacket, and yesterday's necktie, which constitute the undress uniform of waiters, bowed me in. The news of an unexpected arrival seemed to spread instantaneously. Spectral females emerged from the bar, and stood curtsying; a "boots," who in the fallow leisure of his life had apparently taken lodgings in the neighbourhood, rushed across from over the way, and an old gentleman, a very Rip Van Winkle of a landlord, roused himself from a sound sleep in his private parlour, and came forward to give me welcome. Even then I failed to realise the position; it was not until I asked whether I could have a sitting-room, that I saw by the faintest smile on Rip Van Winkle's countenance the true state of the case.

"I could have a sitting-room," he said; and, in proof of his assertion, he immediately showed me four on the ground-floor; large square rooms, which would have accommodated the Vicar of Wakefield and his family party, including Squire Thornhill and Mr. Burchell. I suppose I looked rather dubiously at these vast apartments (I certainly felt that if I were compelled to take one I should have a small corner screened off in which I could live), but the landlord told me there were plenty of other rooms up-stairs, and, on our ascending, showed me two, in either of which the county ball could have been held with ease. I at last selected a small chamber, with one window, and a bedroom immediately above it, both looking on to a very prettily arranged and admirably kept garden, on the actual edge of the Menai Straits.

A total absence of bell-ringing in such an establishment first awakened my curiosity, and when the waiter brought me my luncheon, I proceeded to sound him, suggesting first, with a careless and off-hand manner, that I supposed they were not very full just then? The waiter, who by this time had attired himself in raven black, and wore a spotless neckcloth with a bow which many a curate would envy, was equal to the occasion. He replied, with a deprecatory cough, that they were not quite full. I suggested that their season was probably over? He admitted it. Had they had a good season? An excellent

one. They made up eighty beds in the house, and had often to hire rooms out. Eighty beds! and how many people have they staying in the house now? An expression of agony crossed the waiter's face, and he made for the door. I intercepted him. I pressed home my question. He endeavoured to equivocate. At last I wrung from him the appalling fact, that in that enormous house I was the sole guest.

I think the waiter was the only person who ever knew that I was in possession of that dreadful secret. With the other members of the household I used to play at being perfectly unsuspecting of it. I chatted pleasantly with the landlord, I made a point of talking hurriedly with the chambermaid, as though I knew the value of her time, and was expecting that she would be whisked away to impatient bell-pullers, and when I sent the "boots" on an errand, I always asked him if he had leisure to fulfil it, carefully ignoring the fact that all his time, energies, and blacking were devoted to my service. After awhile, I began to like the solitude immensely. My two rooms were thoroughly comfortable; the cooking and the wines good, and the attendance excellent; and I amused myself by creeping about the house, and looking in at the various rooms, and picturing to myself the people who had last occupied them. I peered in through the door of the great coffee-room, and straightway all the tables piled upon each other became properly arranged around the walls, the dusty blinds of the bow-window were drawn up, the paper in which the looking-glass frame was enshrouded was removed, the rolled-up carpet was put down, and the room peopled. At one of those tables in the bow-window sit the two young men who have just arrived, and are enjoying their dinner, after a five-and-twenty miles' walk; both strong, active, clean-limbed men, albeit they are Londoners, and that ten months out of the twelve are spent by them in confinement and study. One is an attorney, the other a barrister; they are bachelors, and sworn friends; living in the same chambers, belonging to the same club, and always spending their holidays together. Switzerland is their favourite resort, and the chamouis hunters of the Tyrol, and the guides of Chamounix and Courmayeur, are not unacquainted with their names and their exploits, but the war this year has kept them at home, and they are talking of Snowdon and Helvellyn with good-natured contempt. The solitary man at

the table next them, the fat man with the flushed face and heavy jowl, is also a barrister, but of a very different type. That is Mr. Ethelred Jinks, Q.C., a noted parliamentary counsel, who won his spurs at the Old Bailey, but who now never visits the scenes of his former glories, unless specially retained. The power of cross-examination, of screwing the exact reply which he wanted to get out of an unwilling witness, and of frightening a defiant one with the tonitrant tone and redundancy of action which served him so well in the C. C. C., Ethelred has imported into his new sphere, and has thereby made for himself a name. He is looked upon as a wit, and has a collection of highly flavoured stories, which are always ready for when the ladies retire from the dinner-table, and are highly appreciated in the smoking-room. He has been staying with one great man, and is journeying to the house of another, resting at the Penguin's Arms on his way. He listens with an odd kind of wonderment to such scraps of conversation as he hears from the next table, for Ethelred would as soon think of flying as of attempting to walk, and the only climb in which he is interested is the ascent from the front row of the court to the judicial bench, and that is one which he is not likely to make. Tea is the meal which is being served at the next table, with boiled eggs and dry toast, a refreshing and inexpensive repast, partaken of by Mr. Moger of Upper Kelvin-grove, West Holloway, his wife, and sister-in-law. Mr. Moger is a clerk in Somerset House, from which establishment he is now away on a month's holiday. He is highly respectable, and the authorities of Somerset House are pleased to speak of him as "a conscientious man with much zeal for the service." He has never been late in his attendance during the twenty-three years of his official career; he never left an "i" undotted or a "t" uncrossed, or made a blot on any document with which he had to deal; he is priggish, pedantic, and stupid, but immensely respectable. He and his travelling companions arrived at the Penguin's Arms on the top of the coach. They are making this tour, not with any low notion of enjoying themselves, but "to expand their minds, and to enlarge their acquaintance with the works of nature." That is the phrase which Mr. Moger will employ in his lecture at the West Holloway Vestry Hall on the occasion of one of the penny readings, when he will give an account of

his trip. It will be immensely statistical and topographical, and will be delivered in a high-pitched monotone; it will be thought very highly of by the audience, and will come between a song, *Cease Rude Boreas*, by Mr. Squirk, the amateur baritone of the neighbourhood, and a solo on the harmonium by Pedler, the church organist. Other coffee-room characters rose before my fancy: a short man in a red beard, and his tall, Quixote-like companion, who astonished the waiter by declining to drink anything but beer for their dinner, and who have been talking an extraordinary jargon about cross lights, and middle distance, and bits of colour, to the astonishment of the Manchester magnifico next to them. These are artists on their way to Bettws-y-coed, or some such paintable place. There is a great sheaf of what they call "their traps," consisting of easels and camp-stools, mahl-sticks, and white umbrellas with long handles, bound up together, and standing in a corner of the hall. Then I fancied a little group of a father and his boy, the lad going to school for the first time, a little down at leaving his mother and sisters, but kept up by the thought of the new life awaiting him. The father infinitely more depressed at the idea of parting with his only son, and then—then a gust of the autumnal wind blew the coffee-room door to with a bang, the ghosts of my creation vanished, and I was again the solitary guest at the Penguin's Arms.

I had a view of another well-known place, in its out-of-the-season state, before quitting Wales. I had heard so much of the well-known watering-place of Llandudu, its freshness, its salubrity, its beautiful walks round the Great Worm's Head, that I thought I should like to have a look at it. Moreover, I saw by the advertisement, that the dryness of the air, and the cheapness of the lodgings, made it a desirable winter residence for invalids. I am bound to say the invalids had not responded to the suggestion. In my life I never saw such a deserted spot. The place itself is an ordinary British watering-place, a bay between two head-

lands, a crescent line of lodging-houses following the sweep of the bay, and a straight street of shops immediately behind the crescent. In this crescent, a very large one, there was scarcely a house that had not its flag of distress flying, its bill of apartments to let in every floor. It was a raw, autumnal morning, and throughout my walk from one end to the other of the broad handsome esplanade, I did not meet one creature. Down on the enormous breadth of sand I looked, and saw three little children with their governess, and two dogs. I peered in at the combined "bath, library, and billiard room," on the edge of the cliff, and saw an old gentleman, with ragged whiskers and a red comforter, reading the *Standard* of the previous day. Immediately underneath this cliff is a little bit of wooden pier, jutting out into the sea, whereon an elderly lady was taking exercise, walking up and down as shortly and sharply as the polar bear at the Zoological Gardens. On the Great Worm's Head I met a coast guardsmen; I asked him if they had had a good season at Llandudu. He said he did not know; he had only just come there. I asked him if he would have to stop there for some time. I never shall forget the expression of his face, when, after looking round, he said he thought he should. Then I turned and fled to the railway station. I do not know what Llandudu may look like in the season, out of it it is a very gruesome place indeed.

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